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HBCU Social Impact Leaders Program is Expanding to Attract More Students to Finance Careers, Social Impact Investing

Twenty-two diverse student leaders with Shared Interest's inaugural HBCU Social Impact Leaders Program traveled to New York City on June 20-21 to meet with global business executives at Citi and Nasdaq. Students attended workshops and Nasdaq's Closing Bell Ceremony.

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK, USA, August 19, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The HBCU Social Impact Leaders Program, a national pilot initiative that attracted 200 enterprising student leaders from Spelman College, Howard University, Morehouse College, Clark Atlanta University, Delaware State University, and Florida A&M University is expanding to expose even more undergraduates of color to careers in finance and social impact investing, growing fields where Black talent is vastly underrepresented. Starting in the Fall 2024 Semester, two additional HBCUs —and 150 students—will be added to the program, which is led by Shared Interest, a New York-based nonprofit guarantee fund promoting global investment in communities of color nationwide and in Southern Africa.

The expansion comes on the heels of Shared Interest’s first annual HBCU Social Impact Leaders Forum, which brought 22 students to New York City to meet with global business executives at the corporate headquarters of Citi and Nasdaq in June. Students attended industry talks on innovative finance, social entrepreneurship, corporate responsibility, and the future of social impact investing. The group also received information about internships and careers and participated in Nasdaq’s Closing Bell ceremony.

“HBCUs are engines of economic mobility, social justice, and entrepreneurial innovation. A key priority of the Shared Interest HBCU Social Impact Leaders Pilot Program is to develop a diverse pipeline of students who are armed with information, a support network, and professional development resources for pursuing a career in social impact (ESG) investing,” said Ann McMikel, Executive Director of Shared Interest, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary. “Unfortunately, for rising college students who come from economically disenfranchised communities, there is a real dearth of information about the finance profession and the field of social impact investing.

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>
> *Ann McMikel, Executive Director of Shared Interest*

"We, as a global community, won't be able to achieve inclusive community solutions to addressing climate change, poverty reduction, food insecurity, and gender inequalities—priorities of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals—until we invest in programs that can effectively diversify this critical field with the unique talents, lived experiences, and entrepreneurial drive of our Black youth," McMikel said.

National studies show that only 5 percent of finance professionals are Black while 13 percent of the nation's population is Black. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that overall employment in business and finance is projected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through 2032, driving the need for diversifying these fields.

Shared Interest is working with finance leaders to attract more HBCU students to the profession. The Nasdaq Foundation and Henry Schein, Inc. helped to fund the HBCU Social Impact Leaders Forum.

"Nasdaq's purpose is to advance economic progress for all," Selena Singleton, head of board engagement for Nasdaq Listings, said at the Closing Bell Ringing Ceremony attended by the HBCU Social Impact Leaders Forum. "We do this by creating opportunities for the next generation of investors, supporting paths to entrepreneurship for people of all backgrounds, and fostering community-level engagement. Shared Interest exemplifies true social entrepreneurship. Nasdaq and Henry Schein are proud and honored to partner with you and to celebrate your tremendous impact."

In addition to participating in the inaugural forum, students in Shared Interest's year-long pilot program also benefitted from having access to workshops, 25 industry experts, curated virtual content, and resources on careers in innovative finance, social impact investing, and entrepreneurship in the U.S. and Southern Africa. Lessons learned in the outreach continue to fuel their interest in finance.

"Participating in the HBCU Social Impact Leaders Program has given me profound insight into the intersection of finance and social justice," said Aniaba Jean-Baptiste N'guessan, a junior at Morehouse College. "The workshops have equipped me with the knowledge and tools necessary to analyze and implement investment strategies that prioritize both profitability and societal benefit. This aligns perfectly with my career aspirations in economic development and financial economics, where I aim to leverage my skills to drive meaningful change."

Spelman College alumna Aleisha Sawyer, who recently graduated with an economics degree agrees. “This fall, I will be starting my masters in Beijing, China as a Schwarzman Scholar. One of the most impactful experiences in my undergraduate studies was the HBCU Social Impact Leaders Program,” Sawyer said. "I became an advocate while also learning to invest, and that is what we need in this world."

For more information, visit www.sharedinterest.org.

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